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DOI:

[10.1093/oq/kbx032](https://doi.org/10.1093/oq/kbx032)

Document Version

Peer reviewed version

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Citation for published version (APA):

Dillon, E. (2018). Medieval Sources for Martin Crimp's and George Benjamin's *Written on Skin* (2012): Cansos, Vidas, Razos, and Songbooks of Guillem de Cabestaign. *OPERA QUARTERLY*, 33(3-4), 319–336.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oq/kbx032>

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NOTES FROM THE STAGE

Medieval Sources for George Benjamin's and Martin Crimp's *Written on Skin* (2012):
Cansos, Vidas, Razos, and Songbooks of Guillem de Cabestaing

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Inspiration for operatic scenarios can come from unexpected quarters. In the case of George Benjamin's and Martin Crimp's 2012 opera, *Written on Skin*, the commission for a new opera for the music festival at Aix-en-Provence prompted composer and writer to seek a subject connected with the region of Provence. By coincidence, Crimp's daughter was at that time a student at Cambridge University, working with Bill Burgwinkle, a leading scholar of medieval Occitan literature, and thus with unlimited access to a healthy supply of colourful tales of love, death, betrayal, and bloody revenge – staples not just of the operatic, but also the medieval lyric realm. The consequence of that convergence of medieval and contemporary interests is the basis of an opera that recasts the medieval habitat of a twelfth-century troubadour song as a “here-and-now” (as Martin Crimp describes it), a past reanimated not through reconstruction of Occitan melody, but rather through the contemporary voices and orchestral colors through which George Benjamin sonifies that world. While *Written on Skin* invites contextualization from many perspectives (contemporary opera studies, theater studies, or voice theory, to name but a few), its relationship to its medieval sources offers a particularly rich point of entry, not only into the world of Benjamin's and Crimp's operatic creation, but also into the distant environment of its Occitan model.

Benjamin and Crimp took as their source the thirteenth-century Occitan prose biography, or *razo*, of the troubadour Guillem de Cabestaing (?1162-1212), active in the region of Roussillon at the end of the twelfth century. Guillem was author of numerous songs or *cansos* in the tradition of *fin'amors*, and like many troubadours in the tradition his life was fashioned by later writers into short biographies intended to be read and enjoyed as supplements to and “rationales” for the stories of love and loss that unfolded in the songs themselves. Guillem's life (and death) is notorious – as indeed it was in the Middle Ages – for the extraordinarily violent consequences of his forbidden love, centering around the gory consumption of the troubadour's heart, or the “coeur mangé.” The elements of the tale, which was frequently reworked across the Middle Ages and beyond, are as follows. The troubadour, a knight in the service of Raimon de Castel Roussillon, falls for his lord's wife, Lady Soremonda (also named Margarida in some sources), for whom he makes and sings songs. The songs, however, accidentally serve to broadcast their affair, and despite deflections by Guillem to imply the object of his love is in fact his lady's sister, the affair is exposed. Raimon's revenge is wrought through the murder of troubadour, whose heart he cuts out, seasons, cooks, and then serves to his wife. On revelation of the source of her tasty meal, the lady declares its sweet taste will be the last to pass her lips, and then leaps to her death with her husband in hot pursuit. The dramatic events of Guillem's biography transpose into the Crimp's text with ease, but with key transformations. While the medieval ambience of the tale is retained, the historical specificity of the characters is minimized, and Raimon, his wife Soremonda, and Guillem become the Protector, the Woman, and the Boy, respectively. Meanwhile, although the love-triangle and fatal consequences play out as in the *razo*, the Boy, crucially, is no longer a singer and maker of songs, but is rather transposed into a manuscript illuminator. Like his musical predecessor, he comes into service of his lord, the Protector, and is commissioned to write not songs, but rather a book, made of parchment, to

demonstrate the Protector's worldly authority and possessions. In another twist in Crimp's scenario, Angels who flit between past and present stand witness to events, and in turn recount their observations to the audience.

As is typical for the troubadourian tradition, only modest independent evidence survives for the historical figure of Guillem de Cabestaign, his patron Raimon and Raimon's wife Lady Soremonda. There is moreover little independent evidence to corroborate the lurid events recounted in the *vidas* and *razos*. But if the "real" Guillem is thus little more than a shadow in the archives of late twelfth-century Roussillon, his lyric persona – the troubadour – left a vivid trace in his corpus of songs, painstakingly transmitted through generations of singers and scribes, of which several are extant in a handful of songbooks or *chansonniers* surviving from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In some instances, the *chansonniers* intensify that fiction of authentic biography, of there being a "real" Guillem behind the songs, by compiling copies of the *cansos* along with prose biographies and illuminated author portraits. In these contexts, the blood-curdling accounts of the *razo*, in which Guillem dies a brutal death for his love, seem to add emotional credence to the songs, whose central preoccupation is always, inevitably, with the joy and pain associated with love. As well as the dramatic narrative context for Guillem's life, as transmitted in the *razo*, these intensively emotional dimensions of Guillem's songs retain a presence in *Written on Skin*, shaping the heightened interactions of the characters, and are made manifest audibly in the intensity of the musical lines they sing and the orchestral environment which surrounds them. Above all, we should not forget that while parchment assumes a leading role in *Written on Skin* because of the Boy's transformation from troubadour-singer to illuminator, parchment was also *the* vital medium for the preservation of the troubadours in their early reception and remains the primary medium through which we encounter them today.

While a great deal of the medieval story changes in Benjamin's and Crimp's treatment of the Guillem's *razo* – not least, in that transformation of troubadour into a manuscript illuminator – the medieval context remains a vital part of the scenario. The presence of that past is moreover amplified in Katie Mitchell's original production, in which a medieval time-frame remains visible on stage at all times; and through the set design and props, particularly manuscript leaves, researched and created by Vicki Mortimer. Moreover, careful study of the text and music against the backdrop of the medieval sources reveals that Benjamin's and Crimp's engagement with the world of the troubadour was far from superficial: it reveals, rather, a depth interaction with the texts and their material support, and with the wider context of medieval Occitan culture.

Given the intricate relationship between the opera and its medieval sources, the purpose of the present rubric is to create a short *florilegium* of representative examples from the primary sources pertaining to Guillem de Cabestaign. While these materials may be familiar to scholars of medieval Occitan song and poetry, the selection is intended to assist students, scholars, and interested audiences of the opera who may be less familiar with the troubadour repertory. It presents materials from three main categories of medieval evidence pertinent to the study of the opera: the songs, or *cansos*, attributed to Guillem; the *vidas* and *razos*, the prose biographies of Guillem created by later audiences to supplement the songs; and parchment songbooks, or *chansonniers*, in which these materials were copied. Each example is preceded by a brief introduction to the materials, and provides sufficient bibliographic information to help readers to make their own way through the modern editions of primary sources along with pointers to some of the excellent secondary literature to contextualize the sources. While my essay "Vocal Philologies" is designed to be read in conjunction with the sources presented below, this rubric can also function independently, serving as a compilation of "source readings" to supplement future study and appreciation of the opera.

For two excellent introductions to the troubadours, see Frank Akehurst and Judith Davis (eds.), *A Handbook of the Troubadours* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) and Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay (eds.), *The Troubadours: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Interviews with George Benjamin and Martin Crimp also offer many useful insights into their engagement with the medieval sources, for which see “The Angels of History,” Martin Crimp interviewed by Alain Perroux (30 April, 2012), and “The Intensity of the Moment,” George Benjamin interviewed by Alain Perroux (10 March, 2012). The interviews are translated from French by Kenneth Chalmers, and reproduced in the programme for the 2013 and 2017 production of *Written on Skin* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden at 18-23 and 33-39; in the same publication, see also Bill Burgwinkle’s essay “Occitan Origins” for an excellent account of the context for Guillem’s *razo*, at 12-16.

1. *Cansos*

Nine *cansos* attributed to Guillem de Cabesteign have come down to us, two with questionable authority according to their earliest editors. They are transmitted in medieval *chansonniers* devoted to troubadour lyrics (on which more below, see section 3), though as is common for this repertory, none is extant with its melody intact. Though modest by comparison to some of the “star” troubadours (compare to the roughly 45 extant lyrics attributed to Bernart de Ventadorn), the scope of Guillem’s corpus is nonetheless fairly typical of the wider cohort. In their form and content, the lyrics reiterate many of the core values and practices that defined the tradition from its inception in the early decades of the twelfth century. Concerned with the dynamics of love, or *fin’amors*, the collection carefully reviews the painful power relations between the troubadour and his lady. Guillem’s songs also on occasion acknowledge the role of his patron, a vital agent in the dynamics of Occitan song-production. These were the individuals who supported the production and performance of song, and whose reputations in turn were boosted by their naming within songs. Three of Guillem’s *cansos* thus conclude by identifying “Raimon” (referring to Guillem’s patron Raimon de Castel Roussillon) as their intended audience.

The two *cansos* presented here offer a sample of Guillem’s corpus, and are representative, too, of the wider tradition of which he was part. They are particularly appropriate lyric foils to *Written on Skin*, since both have a phantom presence in the scenario of the opera. (The intricate nature of these relationships is explored in full in my essay, “Vocal Philologies;” here I summarize the key points.) The opening lines of the first example, *Aissi cum selh que baissa.l fuelh*, is reworked by Martin Crimp to form part of a “secret page” – a written parchment sheet – prepared for the Protector by the Boy, at the command of Agnès, and recited aloud in Part III, scene xii. It comprises six eight-line strophes, with each being organised around a shared rhyme scheme (known as *coblas unissonans*); it also deploys a metrical scheme that was used in many other songs in the repertory. In formal terms, it demonstrates Guillem’s clear affiliation and familiarity with the preceding tradition, as does its careful modulation of the troubadour’s love, and his painful suffering at the lady’s distance from him – classic preoccupations in the troubadourian *canso*. The second example, *Lo dous cossire*, is quoted in versions of the biographical prose *razo* detailing the Guillem’s traumatic love affair – the main source from which Crimp and Benjamin drew in developing the scenario for their opera. (Extracts of the *razos* featuring the song are provided below, in section 2.) Its versification is rather more rare in the tradition, though by no means a radical departure from conventions: it comprises six fifteen-line strophes, followed by a *tornada* (two shorter summarising passages) which names Guillem’s patron, Raimon de Castel Roussillon. In this instance, the rhyme scheme changes every two

strophes (a scheme known as *coblas doblas*). The lady is once again the subject of the song, first as an object of adoration but increasingly the source of agonising suffering as the song progresses.

In broadest terms, then, these *cansos* embody in lyric miniature the intense emotional landscape inhabited by the characters of *Written on Skin*, and the blurry lines between desire and often violent suffering that define the key erotic relationships in the opera. More locally, the phantom presence of the two *cansos*, summoned into the fabric of the operatic text through quotation and through association with the *razo*, creates close parallels between the troubadour-lady-patron configuration in Guillem's *cansos* and the Boy-Agnès-Protector love-triangle in Crimp's treatment.

Lyrics are referenced here and elsewhere according to system of numbering in Alfred Pillet and Henry Carsten, *Bibliographie der Troubadours* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1933) (hereafter *PC*). Guillem's songs have been edited (and in some cases translated) at several points since the nineteenth century. The Occitan texts presented here follow the edition of the philologist Arthur Långfors, who first published the songs in 1914, and then again in 1924 in a revised form. I here use the 1924 version, for which see *Les Chansons de Guilhem de Cabestanh*, ed. Arthur Långfors, Les Classiques français du moyen âge 42 (Paris: Champion, 1924). The editions are also reproduced in Michel Adroher's study of troubadours from the Roussillon region, along with excellent French translations. No complete English translation of Guillem's lyrics exists. Translation of *Aissi cum selh que bassa.l fuelh* is my own, made in consultation with Adroher's modern French translation in Adroher, *Troubadours*, 171-73; *Lo dous cossire* follows Bill Burgwinkle's translation from *Razos and Troubadour Songs*, transl. William Burgwinkle (London and New York: Garland, 1990), 318-20, and is reproduced here by kind permission of the author. A feature of transmission is the high degree of variance, which ranges from the small differences in spelling to large-scale reordering or omission of stanzas. I have not reproduced the variant lists here, and instead refer interested readers to the detailed commentary to Långfors's edition. Finally, a list of sources is provided at the end of each song, with manuscripts listed according to standard *sigla* by which troubadour sources are conventionally referred to, first established in the nineteenth century by the German philologist Karl Bartsch. The complete list of sources to which the *sigla* refer is provided in section 4.

Aissi cum selh que bassa.l fuelh [*PC*, 213: 1]

I

Aissi cum selh que bassa.l fuelh		As one who lowers the leafy branch,
E pren de las flors la gensor,		and gathers the finest of all flowers
Ai eu chautit en un aut bruelh		so have I chosen from the highest branch
Sobre totas la belhazor,	4	the most beautiful of all,
Quelh eys Dieus, senes fallida,		which God Himself, without doubt
La fetz de sa eyssa beutat		made with His own beauty
E mandet qu' ab humilitat		and commanded that with humility
Fos sa grans valors grazida.	8	her great worth be worshipped.

II

Ab dous esguart siey cortes huelh		Her sweet look, her elegant eyes
M'an fait guai e fin amador,		have made me a gay and fine lover,
Et anc l'amors per qu'ieu me muelh		and the love with which I wash
Ab l'aigua del cor ma color	12	my face with the water of my heart

No fon per mi expandida; Mas era.m fai cantar de grat De tal don an maynt cundeyat, Q'us no la tenc devestida.	16	I have never divulged; but now, I'm made to sing in gratitude by the one to whom many have made overtures without anyone ever having held her naked.
III Non dic fenchas ni laus, cum suelh, Mas ver, on me son mil auctor		I do not utter falsehoods nor flattery, as I used to but truth, which I've witnessed a thousand times,
Q'usquecx dezira so qu'ieu vuelh, Qu'als plus guays es lansa d'amor 20 Que fer al cor ses guandida Ab plazers plazens d'amistat; Mas ieu ai'l colp assaborat: Qu'on plus duerm mielhs me ressida.24	20	for everyone desires that which I want: because for the most gay she is a lance of love which beats the heart without escape with the pleasant pleasures of friendship; I myself have savoured the blow which wakes me from the depths of slumber.
IV Chauzimem fara si m'acuelh		She will show me clemency, if she welcomes me,
E merce contra sa ricor, Qu'ieu li mostre.l mal de que.m duelh		and mercy, contrary to her loftiness, such that I will be able to show her the ill which kills me
E que m'aleuge ma dolor 28 Qu'es dins mon cor expandida: Amor e Cossirier m'a dat, Que del mielhs m'a enamorad	28	and how she adds to my sorrow that she unfolds inside my heart: Love and Sorrow she's given me, for she made me enamoured with the best there is
Qu'es del Pueg tro en Lerida. 32	32	from Puy to Lérida.
V Sos rics pretz es en l'aut capduelh De mi dons c'om ten per gensor Qu'el mon se viesta ni.s despuelh: Gen la saup far Dieus ad honor, 36	36	Her lofty value is in the high prison of the lady, who one takes for the most noble ever to dress and undress in the world: God knew to compose her of nobility and honour
Qu'aissi es pe.ls pros chاوزida,		it is thus why good men show discernment of her
Lai on mostra sa gran beutat E son fin pretz tan esmerat Qu'a las pros n'estai guarnida. 40	40	there where she reveals her great beauty and her fine merit, so refined that they are not surpassed by the most decorated.
VI Tant es genta e de belh escuelh Qu'enveya.m tol d'autra s'amor, Qu'ab ensenhamen, ses jangluelh, L'es dada beutatz ab valor, 44 Cortezia non oblida; Qu'us de corteza voluntat La fai ses ginh d'enemistat Guarder e d'autra esbrugida. 48	44 48	So noble is she and beautifully inviting that her love takes me from loving another, that along with education, without lying, she has been given beauty and merit; not forgetting courtliness; but the use she makes of her courtly desire will preserve her from enmity and other gossip.

Sources

<i>A:</i>	84
<i>B:</i>	53
<i>C:</i>	213
<i>D:</i>	102v
<i>E:</i>	144
<i>I:</i>	105 bis v
<i>K:</i>	90
<i>M:</i>	23, attributed to Guillem de Berguedan
<i>R:</i>	15v
<i>T:</i>	263-4
<i>V:</i>	99
<i>e:</i>	150-2, attributed to Guillem de Berguedan

Lo dous cossire [PC, 213: 5]

I

Lo dous cossire		The sweet thought
Que.m don' Amors soven,		which love often grants me
Dona.m fai dire	3	makes me recite about you, Lady
De vos maynh ver plazen.		many pleasing verses.
Pessan remire		Pensive, I gaze upon
Vostre cors car e gen,	6	your noble, precious body,
Cuy ieu dezire		which I so desire,
Mais que no fas parven.		without ever letting it show.
E si tot me desley	9	Though I may wander,
Per vos, gen no.us abney,		for your sake, I never abandon you
Qu'ades vas vos sopley		but go on yielding to you
Ab fina benvolensa.	12	with fine, loving sentiments.
Dompn' en cuy beautatz gensa,		Lady in whom beauty is brought to perfection,
Mayntas vetz oblit mey,		many times I forget myself,
Qu'ieu lau vos e mercey.	15	for I praise you and implore your mercy.

II

Totz temps m'azire		May the love you forbid me
L'amors que.us mi defen		forever hate me
S'ieu ja.l cor vire	18	if ever I turn my heart
Ves autr' entendemen.		to another site of courtship.
Tout m'avetz rire		You have taken from me laughter
E donat pessamen:	21	and replaced it with worry.
Pus greu martire		There is no man who suffers
Nulhs hom de mi no sen;		a more painful martyrdom than I.
Quar vos qu'ieu plus envey	24	For you, whom I most covet
D'otra qu'el mon estey		amongst all the ladies in the world,
Desautore e mescrey		I must disavow and deny;
E dezam en parvensa:	27	I must make it appear that I have fallen out of
		love
Tot quan fas per temensa		all that I do out of fear
Devetz em bona fey		you must accept in good faith,
Penre, neus quan no.us vey.	30	even when I do not see you.

III

En sovinensa		In my memory
Tenc la car'e.l dous ris,		I hold on to your face and sweet laugh,
Vostra valensa	33	your worth,
E.l belh cors blanc e lis;		and beautiful, smooth, white body.
S'ieu per crezensa		If I were as true to God
Estes vas Dieu tan fis,	36	in my faith,
Vius ses falhensa		there's no doubt I'd pass
Intrer'em paradis;		from life straight into paradise.
Qu'ayssi.m suy, ses totz cutz,	39	For here I am, my heart
De cor a vos rendutz		given over to you without reservation,
Qu'autra joy no m'adutz:		and no other joy attracts me.
Q'una non porta benda	42	There isn't a lady wearing the veil
Qu'ieu.n prezes per esmenda		with whom I'd sleep in compensation,
Jazer ni fos sos drutz,		or for whom I'd act as lover,
Per las vostras salut.	45	that I'd prefer to your simple greeting.

IV

Tot jorn m'agensa		Every day I am uplifted by
.l desirs, tan m'abelhis		desire; your manners,
La captenensa	48	to which I incline,
De vos cuy suy aclis.		bring out the best in me.
Be.m par que.m vensa		It seems as if your love controls me,
Vostr'amors, qu'ans qu'ie.us vis	51	for even before I ever saw you
Fo m'entendensa		it became my intention
Que'us ames e.us servis;		to love you and serve you.
Qu'ayssi suy remazutz	54	And that is how I have remained:
Sols, senes totz ajutz		alone without any help
Ab vos, e n'ai perdutoz		from you; you for whom I've given up
Mayns dos: qui.s vuelha.ls prenda!	57	many others' gifts: let him who wants them take them!
Qu'a mi platz mais qu'atenda,		I'd rather wait for you,
Ses totz covens saubutz,		the source of my joy,
Vos don m'es jois vengutz.	60	even without any public promise.

V

Ans que s'ensenda		Before agony takes flame
Sobre.l cor la dolors,		in my heart,
Merces dissenda	63	may mercy descend
En vos, don', et Amors:		upon you, Lady, and love.
Joys vos mi renda		Let joy bring you to me
E.m luenh sospirs e plors,	66	and banish these sighs and tears.
No.us mi defenda		May neither rank nor wealth
Paratges ni ricors;		forbid me access to you.
Qu'oblidatz m'es totz bes	69	All other rewards are forgotten
S'ab vos no.m val merces.		If mercy does not intercede on my behalf.
Ai, bella doussa res,		Oh, sweet and beautiful thing,
Molt fora grans franqueza	72	it would have struck such a blow for sincerity
S'al prim que.us ayc enqueza		if you had either loved me or refused forever

M'amessetz, o non ges, Qu'eras no sai cum s'es.	75	when first I implored you; for now I don't know where things stand.
VI		
Non truep contenda Contra vostras valors; Merces vo.n prenda Tals qu'a vos si'honors. Ja no m'entenda Dieus mest sos preyardors S'ieu vuelh la renda Dels quatre reys majors Per qu'ab vos no.m valgues Merces e bona fes; Quar partir no.m puese ges De vos, en cuy s'es meza M'amors, e si fos preza Em baizan, ni.us plagues,	78 81 84 87	I can find nothing about your worth to argue with; may mercy for me overtake you so that honour will be yours. May God never hear me from amongst His supplicants if ever I should consent to take the income of the four major kings just because mercy and good faith have failed to do me any good before you. For I could never leave you, in whom I have placed my love; and if ever you should accept that love with a kiss, and it should happen that you liked it,
Ja no volgra.m solses.	90	I would never wish to be apart from you.
VII		
Anc res qu'a vos plagues, Franca dompn'e corteza, No m'estet tan defeza Qu'ieu ans non la fezes Que d'als me sovengues .	94	Nothing you ever want, frank and courtly lady, could ever be so forbidding that I wouldn't do it for you before even thinking of anything else.
En Raimon, la belheza E.l bes qu'en midons es M'a gen lassat e pres.	98	Sir Raimon, the beauty and good things that are found in My-Lord have taken me and hold me captive.

Sources

A:	84
B:	53v-54
C:	212v-213
D:	103
E:	144-5
F:	96-7
H:	21v
I:	105 bis
K:	89 v-90
L:	102 v-103
Q:	6v-7, anonymous
Q2:	111, attribute to Çirardus
R:	95
S:	227-9
T:	258v-260
U:	130v-132
V:	98

<i>Ve. Ag. I:</i>	36
<i>a^l:</i>	275-6
<i>b^l:</i>	6
<i>e:</i>	124-8
<i>χ:</i>	62

2. Extracts from the *Vidas* and *Razos* for Guillem de Cabestaign

Vidas and *razos* are short prose accounts of the lives of the troubadours. Like the *chansonniers*, they postdate the creation of the songs by several decades, and first appear in sources from the mid-thirteenth century, though most likely existed in orally transmitted form as early as the 1220s. Together, they form an important category of prose biography, intended to supplement troubadour lyrics with information about the life of the troubadour, and creative circumstances for their songs, albeit that the veracity of the historical evidence is often questionable. The *vidas* generally comprise biographical information, presented in a predictable order and format. The *razos* also have a biographical emphasis, but unlike the *vidas*, a *razo*'s primary purpose is to provide commentary ("rationale") for a particular song, which is frequently quoted partially or in full within the narrative. Both *vidas* and *razos* survive for Guillem, and in multiple versions. I here provide a complete version of the short version of his *vida* (as it appears in the earliest *chansonniers*) and extracts of two versions of the *razo*, which both cite Guillem's most famous song, *Lo dous cossire*, and in the case of the longer *razo*, also cites a *canso* by Bernart de Ventadorn, *Ab joi mou lo vers e.l comens* (PC, 70: 1). The creation and performance of *Lo dous cossire* is in both cases the catalyst for the violent murder of Guillem by Raimon de Castel Roussillon, rendered in *Written on Skin* in the murder of the Boy by the Protector.

For further information about these texts, see the introductions to the translations by Bill Burgwinkle and Margarita Egan, in *Razos*, transl. Burgwinkle and *The Vidas of the Troubadours*, transl. Margarita Egan (New York and London: Garland, 1984); see also Elizabeth Poe's study of the two genres in her essay "The *Vidas* and *Razos*," in Akehurst and Davis, *Handbook*, 185-97. For an introduction to Guillem's *razo*, see Burgwinkle's essay "Occitan Origins."

The Occitan texts cited are from *Biographies des troubadours: textes provençaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles*, ed. Jean Boutière and A.-H. Schutz (Paris: Marcel Didier, 1950), 154-172. The English translations are from Egan, *Vidas*, 52-55 reproduced by permission of the publisher, and Burgwinkle, *Razos*, 307-20 reproduced by permission of the author. As with the *cansos*, extracts are followed by a complete list of the sources.

Short *vida*

Guillems de Capestaing si fo uns cavalliers de l'encontrada de Rossillon, que confinava com Cataloingna e com Narbones. Molt fo avinenz e prezat d'armas e de servir e de cortesia.

Et avia en la soa encontrada una domna que avia nom ma dompna Seremonda, moiller d'En Raimon del Castel de Rossillon, qu'era molt rics e gentils e mals e braus e fers et orgoillos. E Guillems de Capestaing si l'amava la domna per amor e cantava de leis e fazia sas chansos d'ella. E la domna, qu'era joves e gentil e bella e plaissenz, si.l volia be major que a re del mon. E fon dit Raimon del Castel de Rossillon; et el, com hom iratz e gelos, enqueri lo fait, e sa[u]p que vers era, e fez gardar la moiller fort.

E quant venc un dia, Raimon del Castel Rossillon troba paissan Guillem senes gran compaignia et ausis lo; e trais li lo cor del cors; e fez lo portar a un escudier a son alberc; e fez lo raustir e far peurada, e fes lo dar a manjar a la muiller. E quant la domna l'ac manjat lo cor d'En Guillem de Capestaing, En Raimon li dis o que el fo. Et ella, quant o auzi, perdet lo vezer e l'auzir. E quant ela revenc, si dis: "Seingner, ben m'avez dat si bon manjar que ja mais non manjarai d'autre." Et quant el auzi so qu'ella dis, el coret a sa espaza e volc li dar sus en la testa; et ella s'en anet al balcon e se laissset cazer jos, e fo morta.

Guillem de Cabestaing was a knight from the region of Roussillon, which borders on Catalonia and Narbonnias. He was a very charming man, distinguished in arms and in gallantry and in courtliness. And there was in his region a lady called Lady Soremonda, wife of Lord Raimon de Castel Roussillon, who was very rich and noble, and wicked and fierce and cruel and haughty. And Guillem de Cabestaing truly loved the lady and sang about her and composed his songs about her. And the lady, who was young and noble and beautiful and charming, loved him more than anything in the world.

And this was told to Lord Raimon de Castel Roussillon. And he, like an angry and jealous man, investigated the matter, and learned that it was true. And he ordered that his wife be carefully watched. And so it happened that one day Raimon de Castel Roussillon came upon Guillem passing by without great company, and he killed him. And he took the heart out of his body, and had it taken to a squire in his house, and had it cooked and peppered, and gave it to his wife to eat.

And when the lady had eaten the heart of Lord Guillem de Cabestaing, Lord Raimon told her what it was. And when she heard it, she lost her sense of sight and hearing. And when she came to, she said, "Lord, you have given me such a good thing to eat, that I shall never eat again." And when he heard what she said, he ran with his sword intending to strike her on the head. But she ran to the balcony and threw herself down; and she was killed.

Sources for the *vida* (without musical citations)

Short version:

Fb: 8 v
I: 105v
K: 89v

Longer version:

A: 83
B: 52v
*N*²: 18v

Extract from short *razo* (version in *R*)

Longamen l'amet En G[uilhem] de Cabestanh e.n fe mantas bonas chansos. E la dona.l volc tan de be que.l fey son cavayer, et esteron ab gran joi essemms lonc tems. E fon dig al marit d'ela; don el n'ac gran gelozia e enserret la en una tor, on li foron faytz man desplazer; don G[uilhem] de Cabestanh ac gran dolor don fes una canso:

Lo dos cossire
Que.m don'Amors soven.

E can R[aimon] entendet la canso, crezet que fos de sa molher, car dis en una cobla:

*Tot can fas per temensa
Devetz en bona fey
Penre, neys can no.us vey.*

Et aquest mot entendet car En G[uilhem] non la podia vezer.

E mandet lo marit a.N G[uilhem] que vengues a parlamen. E menet lo ab si foras, luenh del castel, et a trassio e li tole la testa e mes la en .I. carnayrol; e trays li lo cor del ventre. Et intret s'en el castel e fes lo cor raustir, per so car la dona s'agradava fort de cor de salvayzina, e fes lo manjar a sa molher, en samblan qu'el ne manjes.

He loved her for a long time and composed many good songs about her. And the lady loved him so much that she made him her knight, and for a long time he had great joy from her. But her husband was told about it; he became jealous of her and of him and locked her in at the top of a tower, and had her closely guarded. And G. de Cabestanh was in great sorrow and composed this song:

*The sweet thought
That Love often grants me ...*

And when R de Castel Roussillon heard the song that Sir G. composed, he understood it in a way that he believed it was composed about his wife for it says in one stanza:

*All that I do out of fear
You must accept in good faith
Even when I do not see you.*

And these words he understood, for Sir G. was not able to see her. So he (the husband) summoned G. for a talk. He led him outside, far from the castle, and like a traitor cut off his head and put it in a hunting sack. He cut his heart out from his body and put it in a sack with his head. He returned to the castle where he had the heart roasted and had it brought to his wide's table for the lady loved the heart of venison, and he had her eat it without knowing what it was she was eating, all the while pretending to eat it himself.

Sources
H: 21
R: 3v

Extract from longer *razo*

De zo ac la dompna gran tristessa toute la nuoig; et l'e[n]deman mandet per G[uillelm] e si lo receup mal, ez apellet lo fals e traïtor. Et G[uillelm] li calmet merce, si com hom qe non avia colpa d'aiso q'ella l'acassonava, et dist li tot zo com era [e]stat a mot a mot. Et la dompna mandet per sa seror, e per ella sa[u]p ben qe G[uillelm] non avia colpa. Et per zo la dompna li dis e.l comandet q'el degues far una chanson en la qal el mostres qe non ames outra dopna mas ella. Don et fetz aquesta chanson qe dis:

Li doutz cousire...

Et qant R[aimon] de Rossillon ausi la chanson que G[uillelm] avai facha, [el entendet e creset qe] de sa molher [l'agues facha]; don lo fetz venir a parlamen ab si, fora del chastel, et talhet li la testa et mes la en un carnarol, e tras li lo cor del cors e mes lo con la testa.

All that night the lady felt a heavy sorrow over this and the next day she sent for G., gave him a poor welcome, and called him a liar and a traitor. G. begged her for mercy, like a man not guilty of what he was being accused of, and told her everything that had happened, word for word. The lady summoned her sister and through her learned that G. was not guilty. On account of all this, the lady told him and command him to compose a song in which he would show that he loved no other lady but her. And so he composed this song which says:

The sweet thought...

[complete first stanza cited]

And when R. de Roussillon heard the song that G. had composed about his wife, he summoned him for a talk outside the castle, cut off his head and put it in a hunting sack, cut his heart from his body and put it in the sack with the head.

Source

P: 50

3. Examples from *Chansonniers* Transmitting Guillem de Cabestaign's Songs

There are roughly 40 extant *chansonniers* of the troubadours, the earliest dating from the middle of the thirteenth century – that is, several decades after the period in which the songs were first made and performed; many more date from the fourteenth century. Surprisingly few were copied in the region of Occitania, the area in which the troubadours first flourished, while a large proportion were copied in or brought to regions of Italy. Just four have provision for musical notation, and two of these sources are mixed collections, primarily devoted to the transmission of the Northern French song tradition of the *trouvères*. The collections emphasize authorship, with songs frequently compiled and indexed by author. In addition, some collections gather songs with the biographical *vidas* or *razos* of their authors, and several are illuminated with author portraits. Here I reproduce images from two *chansonniers* containing Guillem de Cabestaign's songs to illustrate the variety of formats.

Figure 1 is from manuscript *R* (folio 95), an early fourteenth-century collection compiled in Occitania. It is one of only four *chansonniers* with provision for melodies. In this manuscript, biographical texts are presented separately from the songs at the beginning of the manuscript. In the main body of the manuscript, the songs are not grouped by author, as is the case in many other *chansonniers*, though authorship is indicated by means of red headings at the head of each song. On this folio, the lyrics for *Lo dous cossire* appear on the left-hand column. As with other songs on this folio, it is ruled for music, but the staves remained unfilled.

Figure 2 is from manuscript *K* (folio 89v), a thirteenth-century collection compiled in Italy. It shows the opening of a section of songs attributed to Guillem de Cabestaign. The text only of the *canço* *Lo dous cossire* is preceded by the *vida*, which is copied in red ink. This is the beginning of the section of songs attributed to Guillem, as is signalled by the presence of his author portrait to the left of the *vida*. It depicts Guillem in the standard pose of a knight on horseback.

For an excellent overview on the *chansonnier* tradition see William Burwinkle, "The *chansonniers* as Books," in Gaunt and Kay (eds.), *Troubadours*, 246-62 and William Paden, "Manuscripts," in Akehurst and Davis (eds.), *Handbook*, 307-33.

[INSERT FIGURE ONE HERE]

[INSERT FIGURE TWO HERE]

4. Manuscript Sources Cited

- A*: Vatican City (Rome), Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, lat. 5232
B: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 1592
C: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 856
D: Modena, Biblioteca Estense, α R. 4. 4
E: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 1749
F: Vatican City (Rome), Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chigiani, L. IV. 106
Fb: Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, D 465
H: Vatican City (Rome), Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, lat. 3207
I: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 854
K: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 12473
L: Vatican City (Rome), Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, lat. 3206
M: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 12474
N²: Berlin, Staatsbibliothek cod. Phillipps 1910
P: Florence, Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana, Plut. XLI. cod. 42
Q: Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, 2909
R: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 22543
S: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 269
T: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 15211
U: Florence, Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana, Plut. XLI. cod. 43
V: Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, fr. App. cod. XI
Ve.Ag.I: Barcelona, Biblioteca de l'Institut d'Estudis Catalans
a: Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, 2814
a¹: Modena, Biblioteca Estense, Campori, γ. N. 8.4; 11, 12, 13
b¹: Vatican City (Rome), Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barberiniani lat. 4087
e: Vatican City (Rome), Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barberiniani lat. 3965
v: Barcelona, Biblioteca de Catalunya, 7
χ: G. M. Barbieri, *Dell'origine della poesia rimata* (1790)